

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 remain in the application for further prosecution. Claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 16, 17, 21 and 23 have been amended. Claims 26-31 have been added.

The Examiner indicated that claims 8 and 9 “*would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 . . . and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.*” The Applicants believe that new claims 26 and 27 include allowable aspects of claims 1 and 8 (new claim 26), and claims 1, 8 and 9 (new claim 27), which the Examiner acknowledged to contain allowable subject matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-7, 9-22 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being anticipated by Walker (U.S. Patent No. 6,234,896). The Examiner (Office Action, page 3) alleges that Walker discloses the invention and, in particular, that,

Walker provides a system, wherein, a player can terminate a video presentation at a gaming device and can resume display of the video presentation from the point of termination, at another time or game device.

The Applicants respectfully disagree on the basis that significant claim features and limitations are missing from Walker.

The present invention can be distinguished from Walker by the fact that the present invention allows a player to pause the game, store the status of the game and, at a later time, to retrieve the status of the paused game, and to continue game play from the point that the game was stored. This limitation is recited in all of the independent claims (1, 10, 15, 16 and 25), as amended by this Reply, as follows.

1. A method of conducting a game of chance on a gaming machine, comprising: . . . storing a status of the paused game of chance . . . retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database; and continuing

play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.

10. A method of conducting a game of chance on one or more gaming machines, comprising: . . . storing a status of the paused game of chance at a central database linked to and remote from the gaming machines; retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database; and continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.

15. A method of conducting a game of chance, comprising: . . . storing a status of the paused game of chance . . . retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database; and continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.

16. A system for conducting a game of chance, comprising: a gaming machine including . . . storing a status of the paused game of chance, . . . means for retrieving the status of the paused game . . . ; and means for continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.

25. A system for conducting a game of chance, comprising: . . . storing a status of the paused game of chance, . . . means for retrieving the status of the paused game of chance from the central database; and means for continuing play of the game of chance beginning from a point at which the game of chance was paused.

In contrast, Walker does not store a game, it stores an award in the form of a video presentation. It is the receipt of the award (video presentation) that Walker pauses, not the game itself. Walker states (column 4, line 65, through column 5 line 6),

. . . each slot machine is configured to provide at least a video payout (e.g., a video presentation), on each slot machine play, in addition to conventional payouts (e.g., a monetary sum) that are commonly provided by slot machines. Therefore, a player always wins at least a video payout on each play. In alternate embodiments, the invention includes payouts of video information as the only payout, and/or video payouts supplemental to normal cash payouts but without a win on every play.

Walker further elaborates, stating (column 2, lines 3-7),

[a] further object of the invention is to provide a gaming system, wherein a player can terminate a video presentation at a gaming device and can resume

display of the video presentation from the point of termination, at another time or gaming device.

Walker continues (column 5, lines 31-34),

[s]uch an arrangement allows a player to resume display of a video presentation at a future play session and, thus, provides additional incentive for a player to resume slot machine play.

All of the above quotes point out that the video presentation is an award for playing the game and, further, that the video presentation award may be terminated by the player and later resumed and displayed from the point of termination. Walker is silent with respect to pausing and resuming the play of the wagering game itself. To further overcome this rejection, claims 1 and 16 have been rewritten to include not only the pause and store steps, but also the retrieving and continuing play steps.

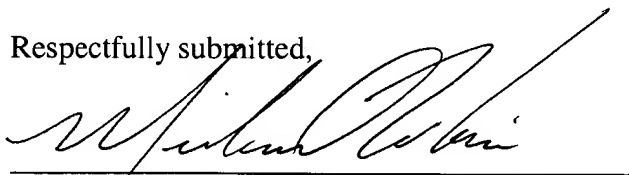
The Applicants maintain that pausing the game, storing the game at its point of termination, retrieving the game, and then allowing a player to continue game play from the point of termination is a novel and non-obvious feature over Walker.

Conclusion

The Applicants believe the claims are in condition for allowance, and action towards that end is earnestly solicited. If there are any matters which may be resolved or clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated.

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Respectfully submitted,



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